

OF [REDACTED] #1132 0740024  
O 150019Z MAR 73 ZYH ZFF-1  
FM THE WHITE HOUSE

25X1

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

~~SECRET~~ WH30735 [REDACTED]

25X1

TO: AMBASSADOR GODLEY  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, THERE CONTINUES TO BE A DISTURBINGLY HIGH LEVEL OF MOVEMENT OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT ON THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL. ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT THIS MOVEMENT IS FOLLOWING THE PATTERNS ESTABLISHED PRIOR TO THE AGREEMENT ON VIET-NAM AND THAT DISTRIBUTION IS BEING MADE TO COMMUNIST UNITS IN LAOS, CAMBODIA, AND SOUTH VIET-NAM.

2. THIS TRAFFIC IS IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF ARTICLES 7 AND 20 OF THE VIET-NAM AGREEMENT, AS WELL AS CONTRARY TO THE GENERAL SPIRIT OF THE VIENTIANE 1973 AGREEMENT. WE HAVE REGISTERED OUR VIGOROUS OBJECTIONS THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH HANOI AND HAVE PUBLICLY STATED OUR CONCERN. IF THERE IS TO BE ANY PROSPECT FOR A SERIOUS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS WHICH THE COMMUNISTS HAVE UNDERTAKEN, WE CLEARLY CAN NOT RPT NOT TOLERATE THE CONTINUATION OF THESE VIOLATIONS.

3. WE ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING EXECUTING SOME AIR STRIKES AGAINST TRAFFIC ON THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL, PROBABLY OVER A TWO-DAY PERIOD, WITHIN THE NEXT SEVEN TO TEN DAYS. WE WOULD PLAN TO HIT VEHICLES, SUPPLY DEPOTS AND TRANSIT POINTS, ALL OF THEM ON LAO TERRITORY.

4. WE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT SOUVANNA SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE ACTION WE CONTEMPLATE, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH OUR ABILITY TO EXECUTE THESE STRIKES TO BE CONTINGENT UPON HIS CONSENT. FROM A PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE BEST IF WE WERE TO CARRY OUT THE ACTION AT HIS REQUEST, AND WE WOULD WELCOME SUCH A REQUEST IF HE IS PREPARED TO MAKE IT.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE TAKES HIS TRADITIONAL POSITION THAT THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL IS A NORTH VIETNAMESE-UNITED STATES AFFAIR WHICH IS BEYOND HIS CONTROL, WE WOULD AT VERY LEAST WISH HIM TO EXPRESS HIS APPROVAL OF OUR ACTION,

\*\*\*\*\* WHSR COMMENT \*\*\*\*\*

SCOWCROFT, LORD, HOWE

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EVEN IF HE DECLINES TO MAKE A SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR IT.

6. YOU SHOULD, THEREFORE, APPROACH SOUVANNA AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, SHARE WITH HIM SOME OF OUR INTELLIGENCE INDICATORS, ADVISE HIM OF OUR CONTINGENCY THINKING, AND OBTAIN HIS CONCURRENCE IN OUR EXECUTION OF THESE AIR STRIKES IF EVENTS PROVE THEM NECESSARY. HIS REQUEST FOR THEM WOULD BE WELCOMED. AT VERY LEAST, PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF HIS ACQUIESCENCE IS WANTED.

WARM REGARDS.

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